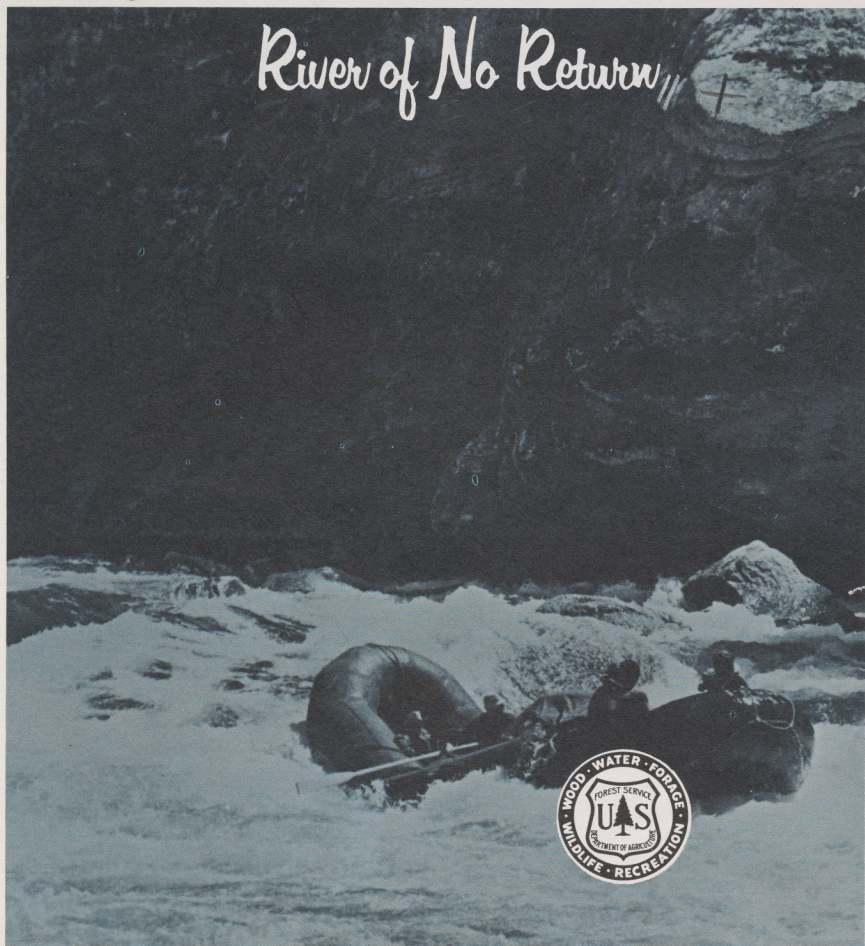


Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

³ + The salmon,

River of No Return



The Salmon

River of No Return

About 100 million years ago, geologists believe, a large mass of granite intruded central Idaho. It buckled the earth's crust and extended 250 miles north and south and ninety miles across the heart of Idaho. This gigantic upward thrust caused the waters to the east to seek an outlet southward to the sea. When the high granite mountains of central Idaho were breached, the waters of the Lemhi Valley found a course westward to the Pacific Ocean through the Salmon River Canyon.

The Salmon River originates in the Sawtooth Valley and Lemhi Valley of central and eastern Idaho. Snows from the Sawtooth Mountains and Salmon River Mountains in the south and the Clearwater Mountains and Bitterroot Mountains in the north feed this wild river. It is 425 miles long and drains 14,000 square miles. Rising at elevations above 8,000 feet, the Salmon River cascades to an elevation of 905 feet at the mouth, where it joins the Snake River. The Salmon flows north to Salmon, Idaho, westward approximately 165 miles to Riggins, Idaho, and then north about 85 miles to the Snake River.

The 80-mile stretch of river, between the end of the road west of North Fork, Idaho, and the end of the road from Riggins, Idaho, is generally known as "The River of No Return." For more than 150 years after the first white men came to this valley, only one-way trips down the Salmon River were possible. But in recent years, with the advent of power boats, skilled river men have been able to travel up the river. Even today, however, this trip demands the best in skill, experience, and equipment.

The Salmon is a challenging water-way through a vast wilderness. It flows through the second deepest gorge on the continent. Only the Snake River Canyon is deeper than the Salmon River gorge. The Salmon's granite-walled canyon is one-fifth of a mile deeper than Grand Canyon. Approximately 180 miles of the Salmon canyon is more than one mile deep.

In the 79 miles from the end of the North Fork road to the end of the Riggins road, one-half mile upstream from the Wind River bridge, the Salmon drops a total of 969 feet, approximately 12 feet per mile. Peak flows occur from the middle of May to July 1. It is at its lowest in January and February, but these highs and lows are subject to seasonal changes. River crossings 100 years ago in the "No Return" stretch were made by raft, swimming, cable crossing bridge, or ferry. Today you will find pack bridges at Horse Creek, Campbell Ferry (Trout Creek), Fivemile Trail (Mackay Bar) and Wind River (at the end of the road from Riggins, Idaho).

White - Water Boating the Salmon

Rubber rafts, kayaks, powerboats and flatbottom barges offer exciting adventure in boating through this wilderness area. If you lack experience, equipment, or knowledge of the river, you should definitely secure the services of a licensed outfitter or guide in this area. Plan frequent, convenient layovers as you boat the Salmon.

Let the Forest Ranger know of your plans to travel in this country: when and where you are going and when and where you plan to come out of the area. Boating on the Salmon is subject to State of Idaho boating regulations. Information about these regulations and equipment is available from the Idaho Fish & Game Department, Boise, Idaho. Contact the Forest Service patrol boat on the river.

There are more than 40 stretches of rapids on the river. Veteran river men consider the Pine Creek rapids the most turbulent and hazardous. To avoid these rapids, many people start their boating west of Pine Creek.

You will run about three miles of white water at Ruby Rapids. There are other dangerous rapids at Ranier, Salmon Falls, Bailey, Big and Little Mallard, Little Elk Horn, Johnson, Chittam, Fivemile, and Long Tom Creeks. Seething foam colors the water in narrow canyons. Gun Barrel Rapids and Salmon Falls offers the best in white-water boating.

Granite walls line many falls and rapids. Stretches of calm water and deep, quiet pools alternate with powerful rapids and four, six and eight-foot waterfalls. Large boulders, jagged, sawtooth rocks and fallen trees require advance scouting. Float boating is hazardous and is not advised during the spring high-water period, from the latter part of May to the end of June. Those unfamiliar with "The River of No Return" can get into dangerous falls and rapids without warning and learn too late that there is no opportunity to beach their boat. While veteran boatmen run the falls and rapids—some rated Class V on a six-point scale — the amateur should remember that chances of rescue in case of upset are poor.

Wear life jackets when you are boating the Salmon and tie all your gear securely to the boat.

Points of Interest

Shoup is named for Idaho's last territorial governor and first state governor, Colonel George L. Shoup. He established a store in Leesburg, Idaho, during the 1866 gold rush. In 1890 he represented Idaho in the U. S. Senate.

The Middle Fork of the Salmon River joins the main Salmon about 20 miles west of Shoup. From the confluence of Marsh and Bear Valley Creeks, some 20 miles northwest of Stanley, the stream threads its way northward through deep canyons in the one-and-one-quarter million acre Idaho Primitive Area. A map-folder of the Middle Fork country is available from Forest Service Ranger Stations.

Hot Springs dot this area. Though only a few have been developed for commercial use, men and wild-life have used these pools for ages: men to wash and cure their ills and the animals to supply a deficiency in their diet. Hydrogen sulfide gas gives many of these hot springs a peculiar odor. Barth Hot Springs is at the mouth of Hot Springs Creek.

Nez Perce Trail crosses the Salmon River near Campbell's Ferry Bridge. This is the southern route of the historic trail, established long before the white man arrived on the scene. Indians used the trail in their travels to the east to hunt buffalo.

Grangeville-Boise Trail across the Salmon was the first road connecting north and south Idaho. One of the first bridges across the Salmon was constructed at French Creek, about 20 miles east of Riggins. It connected the primitive road from Grangeville, through Florence, Warren, Boise Basin and on to the state capitol at Boise. The first bridge is described as a wire bridge; it was later replaced by a steel girder bridge. History does not record when the steel bridge collapsed. There is a cable tramway where the steel bridge once stood.

Tom-Agit-Paw (Big Fish Water)

Shoshoni Indians called this stream Tom-Agit-Pah: Big Fish Water. It is an appropriate name for a stream which provides sportsmen with a variety of trout and salmon as well as whitefish.

Studies have placed the earliest inhabitants in the Salmon River canyon five to eight thousand years ago. Sites of extensive manufacture of arrowheads demonstrate that the entire watershed was familiar to many Indians. The Wallowa tribe of the Nez Perce Indian Nation lived in the lower reaches of the river. Sheepeater (Tukuarika) Indians lived in the central, most inaccessible part of the Salmon River. There are old Indian campsites at Hancock bar and at Corn Creek bar.

The Shoshoni told Lewis and Clark that the Tom-Agit-Pah could not be traveled in canoes. Sacajawea's brother, Camehwait, told Captain Clark the river was so hemmed in by highrocks that there was no possibility of traveling along the shore. Captain Clark made a reconnaissance down the Salmon River, guided by Old Toby, who was an older member of the Lemhi Tribe of Shoshoni Indians. On August 23, 1805, Clark turned back at a point about 14 miles downstream from North Fork. He was convinced the Salmon River canyon was impassable for canoe, foot or horse travel. Clark named this stream the Lewis River and applied the name Salmon to what is now Carmen Creek.

The coming of the white man ultimately resulted in three Indian wars in this area: The Nez Perce Indian War of 1877, the Bannock Indian War of 1878 and the Sheepeater Indian War of 1879.

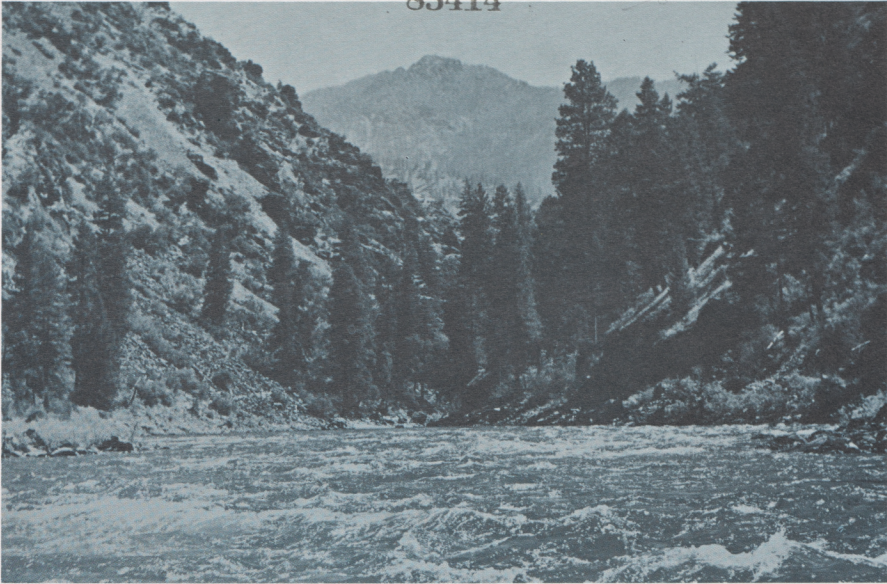
The first known attempt of white men to navigate the Salmon River ended in tragedy. In March of 1832, four Hudson's Bay Company trappers left Salmon, Idaho, to float down the river in a small boat made of hides. Two of the men drowned. The other two reached Fort Nez Perce 30 days later "quite naked."

Thirty years later, a party of twelve men started up the Salmon in the vicinity of the trail to Florence, Idaho. Just below the mouth of the South Fork of the Salmon, they met two men who had started down the treacherous river from a point near Lemhi, Idaho. These two men are believed to be the first boatmen to run the Salmon River. Unfortunately, their names have been lost with time.

About 1890 Henry Guleke, and a man named Sanderland, explored the Salmon River rapids and falls. Their services were in great demand to float miners, prospectors, trappers and their supplies into this vast roadless country. Guleke and Sanderland ran the river canyon in wooden flatboats steered by large sweeps. A new boat was built for each trip and dismantled at downstream destinations. Timber from these flatboats was then used in constructing buildings in many Salmon River Canyon gold mining camps. Guleke continued his boating on the Salmon until the early 1920's.

Following World War II, rubber rafts replaced the wooden flatboats for float trips. Conventional motorboats and jetboats now travel both ways on the river.

Experienced guides and boatmen have made this beautiful river accessible to hunting, camping and





fishing parties. Forest Service patrol boats generally travel the river from April to November.

Hunting-Fishing

National Forests are open to hunting and fishing. An Idaho state license is required. Information about seasons, license requirements and bag limits is available from:

Idaho Fish & Game Department
518 Front Street
Boise, Idaho

The river offers chinook and blueback (sockeye) salmon as well as sea-going "steelhead" rainbow trout, eastern brook, native rainbow, Dolly Varden, cutthroat, smallmouth bass and whitefish. Common non-game fish include suckers, chubs and squawfish. Sturgeon, silver, chum (dog) and humpback (pink) salmon are rare.

Reared in the headwaters and major tributaries, the steelhead is an ocean-going trout. Steelhead swim downstream to the sea and return to the stream of their birth to spawn. Experienced steelhead fishermen find fishing for the smaller trout tame sport by comparison.

Mighty spring chinook salmon leave the ocean in April and migrate up the Columbia, Snake and Salmon Rivers. They spawn in the Salmon River and its tributaries in August and September. Young chinook remain in the mountain streams for two years before they descend to the sea. After one to four years at sea, chinook return to their ancestral mountain streams to spawn and die.

Hunting opportunities are varied. The Salmon River canyon and surrounding country abound in big game. Elk, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, deer and bear are hunted with rifle or camera. Hunters approach this area by boating from the road ends, from the few side roads, or by aircraft to landing fields, and proceed into the back country on foot or horseback. Animals common to the Rocky Mountains are found in the river valley: mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, lynx, beaver, otter, marten, mink, muskrat, raccoon, skunks and marmots.

Pack and riding stock are available in the area. For information about outfitters and guides, write:

Idaho Outfitters &
Guides Assn.
Box 95
Boise, Idaho

Game birds include Franklin (fool hen), blue and ruffed grouse, chukars and California quail. As you travel the river and trails, you will have opportunities to see large birds of prey such as golden and bald eagles. There are ospreys, ravens and several kinds of hawks as well as geese, teal, pintails, and fish ducks. Rattlesnakes inhabit the area and travelers should carry snake bite kits and **know how to use them.** Your best opportunities to see wildlife are in the early mornings and late evenings

Forest Fires are especially dangerous in this remote country. Prevention and early detection are essential to preserve the resources and beauty of this country. Build campfires in safe places, away from dry grass and needles. Never build a fire during a strong wind. When extinguishing your campfire with water, stir the coals clear to the bottom with a stick or shovel. A fire is never out until it is cold. Feel it! The Forest Service requires that each boat or trail party carry a shovel, axe and bucket. Report forest fires promptly to the nearest Forest Service officer.

Smoking can be hazardous in the forest. Do not smoke while traveling. Make a rest stop at a safe place — creek shore, on a barren rock or at designated spots. Extinguish and crush all tobacco. Hold your match until it is cold — then break it in two.

Garbage and trash should not be dumped into the river. Dispose of refuse in pits or containers at developed campsites, or pack it out with you.

Airports-Roads

Only experienced mountain pilots should attempt to use landing strips and airports in this primitive country. Information about airport facilities is available in the "Idaho Airport Facilities" directory and the "Idaho Aeronautical Chart" from:

Idaho Department of Aeronautics
2103 Airport Way
Boise, Idaho

Those new to this country should check at the



Forest Service Ranger Stations at Warren, Magruder, Indianola, Dixie, Elk City, Red River, Riggins or McCall before traveling the roads in the Salmon River country. Weather changes suddenly; snows come early in this high, mountain country. Many of the roads require four-wheel-drive vehicles.

East of Riggins you can drive up the Salmon for 28 miles to Vinegar Creek. The road turns south at French Creek to Burgdorf, the pioneer mining area of Warren, and the South Fork of the Salmon River. West of North Fork, the road follows the Salmon for 46 miles to about eight miles below the mouth of the Middle Fork. At Panther Creek, eight miles west of Shoup, the road turns south to Leesburg and Cobalt.

There are only two access roads to the Salmon River in the 79-mile stretch between the end of the Riggins road and the end of the North Fork road. Both roads approach the river from the north. The Dixie Ranger Station road extends from Mackay Bar north to Red River and Elk City. Idaho State Highway 14 connects Elk City and Grangeville. The Mallard Creek road extends from the Salmon River at Little Creek north to the junction with the Elk City - Dixie Road at Jack Mountain.

National Forests

The Salmon River starts in the Sawtooth National Forest, runs through the Challis National Forest, and marks a line between four other National Forests, embracing 7.8 million acres of National Forest land. It forms a common boundary, along its course, between the Salmon, Bitterroot, Nezperce and Payette National Forests.

You will see a few cabins along the river. Some are on small pieces of private land deeded to hardy homesteaders or miners. There are also a few camps and cabins on National Forest lands, by permit. Forest Service signs identify streams feeding into the river and mark campsites developed by the Forest Service.

These National Forests are important to Idaho and the Nation. An increasing population and growing industrial needs place unprecedented demands for space, products and services on the National Forests. Planning must allow for as many compatible uses as possible. Various uses of the land must be coordinated so that they complement each other and maintain or improve the resource. Foresters are perpetuating the resources and beauty here. To accomplish this requires effective planning and intensive management. The Forest Service calls this multiple-use planning and management.

Congress, in the Act of June 12, 1960, directed that National Forests be managed under the principles of multiple use of the land and sustained yield of renewable resources. Development and management are based on the public's continuing needs for water, wood, wildlife, recreation and forage.

For more than 40 years the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service has pioneered in the protection and management of America's wilderness heritage. These lands of grandeur and expanse, spreading free and wild, offer primeval recreational, scientific, educational and historical values of benefit to our entire Nation. The 1.2-million acre Idaho Primitive Area stretches to the south of the Salmon River. To the north the Forest Service has classified 216,878 acres as the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area. Farther north is the 1.2-million acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. These areas are part of the Forest Service Wilderness land management program.

Additional, detailed information about the Salmon River and these National Forests is available from:

Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest
Hamilton, Montana

Forest Supervisor
Nezperce National Forest
Grangeville, Idaho

Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest
McCall, Idaho

Forest Supervisor
Salmon National Forest
Salmon, Idaho



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Salmon River Mileage Log

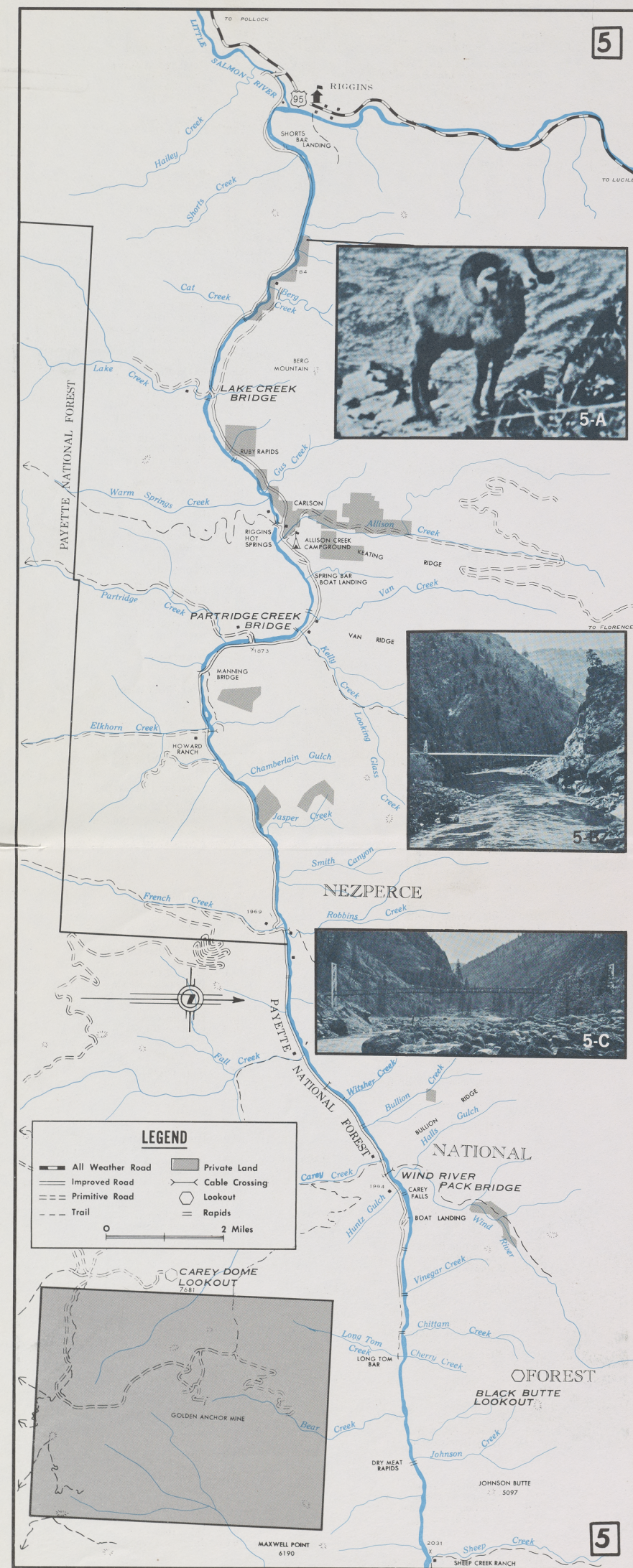
River Mile	South Bank	Elevation	River Mile	North Bank
River mile zero, at Corn Creek Campground, is equivalent to U.S. Corps of Engineers River Mile 190.8.		2,929'	0.0	Road end at *Corn Creek Campground. 46 miles west of North Fork, Idaho
2.3	Gun Barrel Rapids	2,868'	0.4 2.2	Wheat Creek Gun Barrel Creek
3.8	Pack Bridge		3.6	*Horse Creek
4.4	Stub Creek		3.8	Bitterroot N.F. Salmon N.F. boundary
6.3	Fern Creek	2,860'	5.6 6.3 6.7	Legend Creek Bow Creek Spindle Creek
7.4	Cottonwood Creek		7.1	Lucky Creek
8.1	Salmond N.F. - Payette N.F. boundary			
9.7	Phantom Creek		8.9 9.7 10.6 11.1 11.3	Alder Creek Eagle Creek Fawn Creek & Trail *Lantz Bar Little Squaw Creek
11.5	Otter Creek		11.8	Eakin Ridge
11.9	Tag Creek			
13.1	Disappointment Creek & Bar	2,744'	12.3	Dwyer Creek, West end of River Trail
15.6	Devil's Toe Creek	2,720'	13.6 13.7 14.9	Devil's Teeth Rapids Devil's Teeth Creek *Elkhorn Creek
17.8	Chamberlain Creek		16.2 16.6 17.0	Fortune Creek Thirsty Creek Little Devil's Teeth Rapids
19.5	Big Bear Creek		17.9 19.1	Big Squaw Creek & Trail Smith Gulch
20.4	Cub Creek		19.7	*Corey Bar
22.9	Arctic Creek		21.0 21.6 21.9	Black Creek Salmon Falls Bitterroot N.F. Nezperce N.F. boundary. Sabe Creek
25.1	Cold Creek		23.8	Nixon Creek
25.3	Hot Springs Creek	2,599'	25.9	Bear Creek & Bar
26.1	Barth Hot Springs	2,555'	28.4	Deer Park Creek
27.1	*Bruin Creek & Bar		29.6	Rattlesnake Creek, trail junction, Crowfoot Place.
28.8	Dillinger Creek		32.2	*Bargamin Creek, Bar, Trail
29.6	Crow Creek	2,520'	32.6 32.7	Bailey Creek Bailey Rapids, Allison Place
30.6	Maggie Creek & Bar		32.7	Myers Creek
31.1	Raven Creek			
34.0	Hida Creek	2,505'	34.3 36.2	Fivemile Creek Yellow Pine Bar
34.1	Split Rock Rapids		37.3	*Big Mallard Creek & Bar
34.2	Big Eddy Rapids		39.1	Mallard Creek road, Whitewater Ranch
36.3	Sapp Creek		40.7 -0.8	*Whitewater Camp-ground Elkhorn Creek Elkhorn Rapids
36.7	Silge Creek	2,402'	42.7	Slide Creek
37.1	Richardson Creek & Bar		44.9	Groundhog Bar
41.6	Mallard Rapids		46.8 48.6 49.0 50.1 52.3	Rhett Creek *Blowout Creek & Bar, Indian paintings Paine Creek Boise Creek & Bar Jersey Creek, Painter mine
41.8	Little Trout Creek	2,330'	55.5	Mackay Bar road, Mackay Bar bridge, and Indian campsite
42.1	Growler Rapids		58.1	Cove Creek
42.9	Trout Creek		62.3	Indian Creek
43.0	Campbells Ferry Bridge, Chamberlain Trail	2,330'	63.6 66.1	Cougar Creek Crooked Creek & Bar Shepp ranch
43.4	Moore Creek		68.0 68.9 69.4	Basin Creek Whiskey Bob Creek *Bull Creek & Bar
44.3	Ruff Creek		72.8 76.0	Elk Creek Johnson Creek
46.0	Fall Creek	2,330'	77.8	Cherry Creek
52.3	Lemhi Creek		81.0	Wind River Pack Bridge
52.8	Little Fivemile Creek, Buckskin Bill Cabin			
54.6	Fivemile Creek	2,208'		
54.8	Threemile Creek			
54.9	Ludwig Cabin			
56.3	Ludwig Rapids	2,150'		
56.7	Mackay Bar			
60.8	South Fork Salmon River			
61.2	Mann Creek	2,126'		
62.8	Warren Creek & Bar			
66.2	James Creek			
70.1	Polly Creek & Bar	2,075'		
71.2	Polly Bemis cabin			
72.6				
75.3	Cottontail Creek	2,069'		
	*California Creek & Bar	2,039'		
	Maxwell Point Creek & Bar			
	Dry Meat Rapids			
76.7	Bear Creek	1,960'	72.8 76.0	Elk Creek Johnson Creek
77.7	Long Tom Creek & Bar		77.8	Cherry Creek
78.2	Chittam Rapids			
79.1	End of Road, 28 miles to Riggins, Idaho			
80.8	Huntz Gulch boat landing			
*Forest Service Campsites				

Down the river, beyond Mile 81.0, you will see Forest Service signs marking: Jasper Gulch, Chamberlain Creek, Dolly Creek, Van Creek and Spring Bar boat landing, boat ramp and campsite.

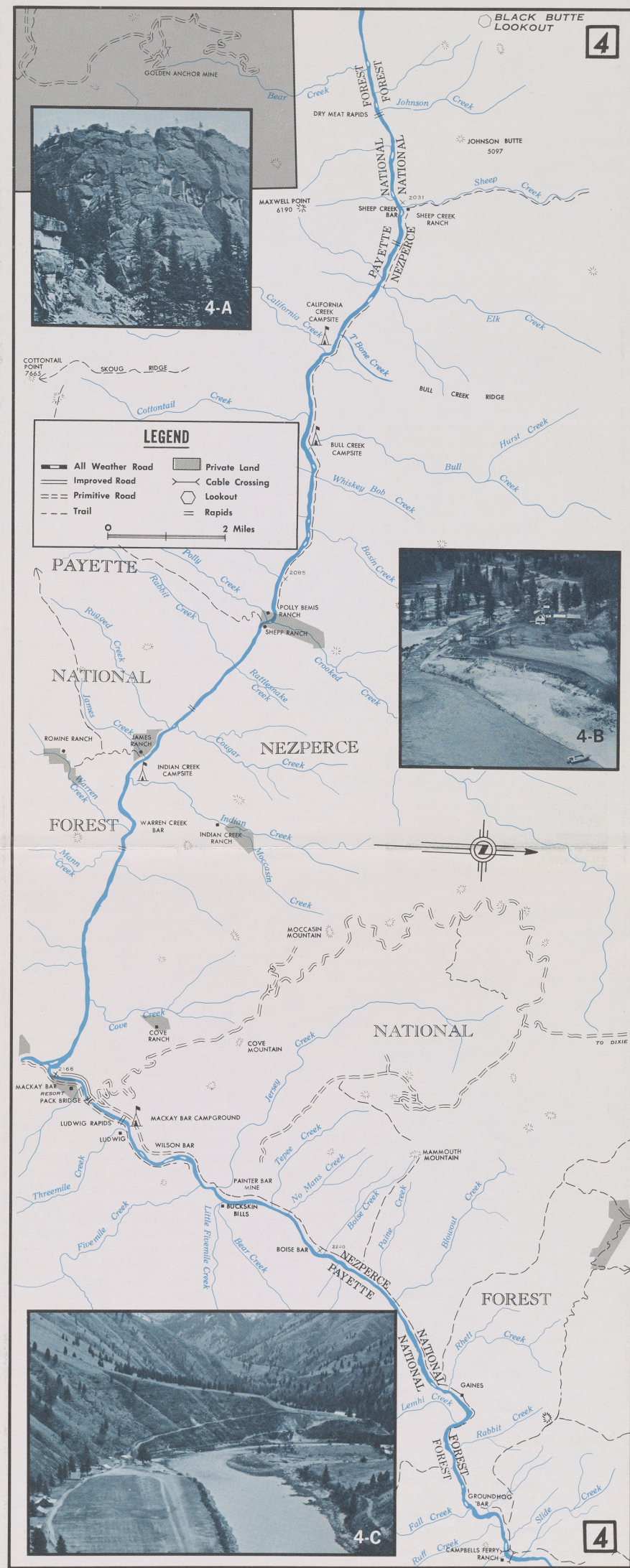
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Salmon River Bridges at: Wind River, Mackay Bar, Trout Creek, Horse Creek.

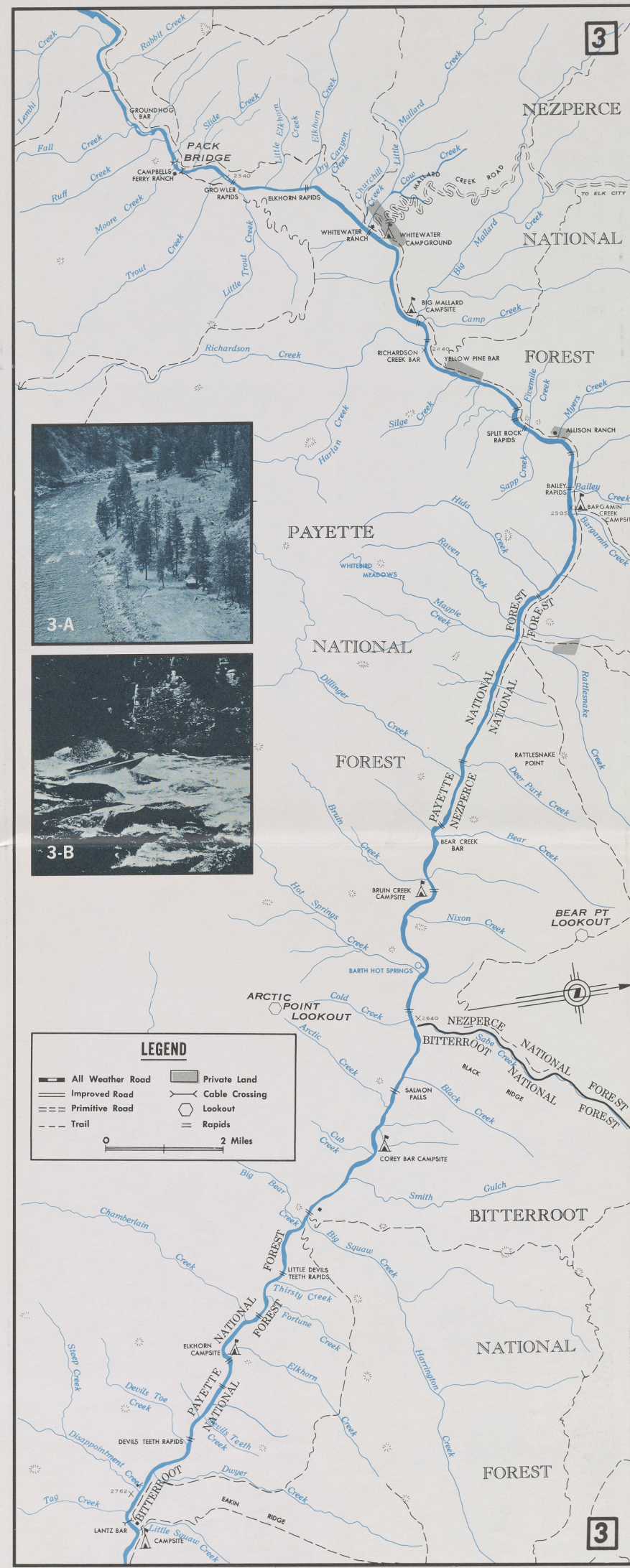
The salmon - River of No Return



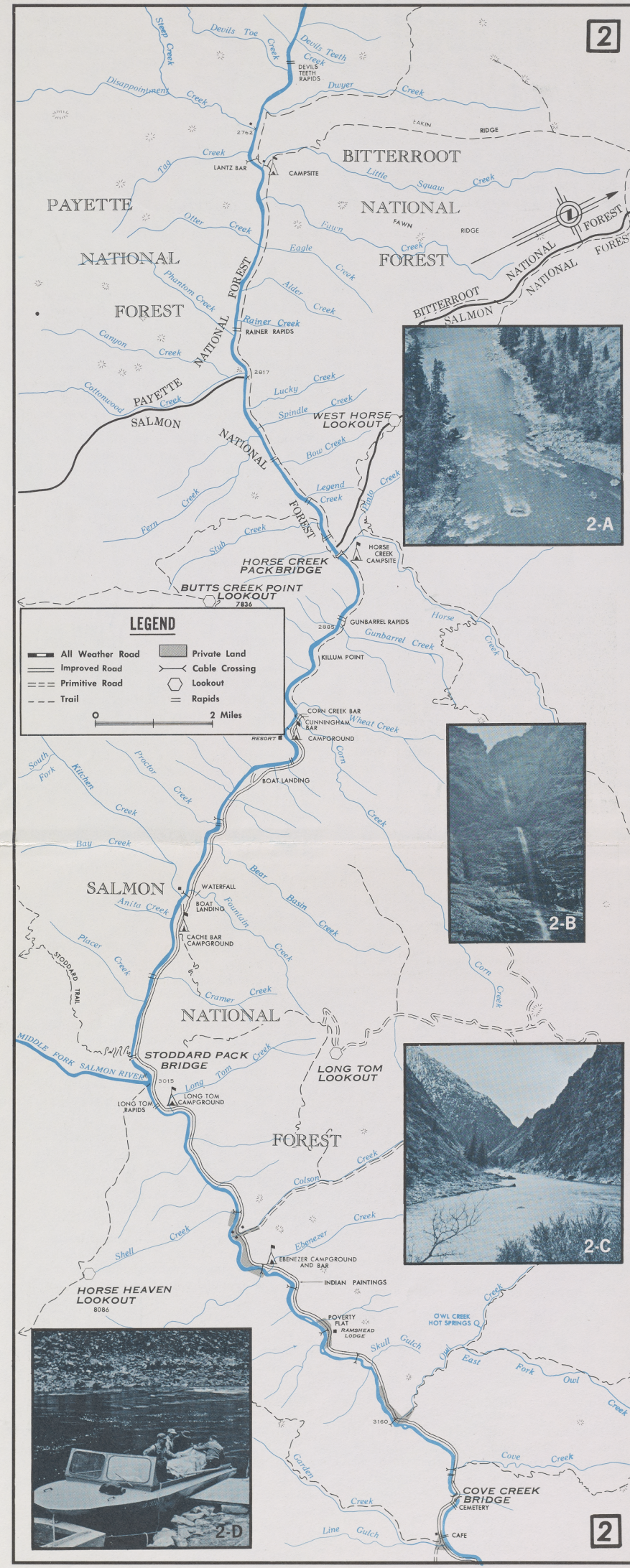
5-A Bighorn Sheep
5-B Manning Bridge
5-C Wind River Bridge



4-A Canyon Wall
4-B Shepp Ranch
4-C Mackay Bar



3-A Barth Hot Springs
3-B Salmon Falls



2-A Gunbarrel Rapids
2-B Fountain Creek Falls
2-C Middle Fork
2-D Landing Near Shoup



1-A Patrol Boat
1-B Pine Creek Rapids
1-C Indianola Ranger Station

River of No Return

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